Invite 'Woody' To a Picnic

Fix an "acorn sandwich" for woodpeckers. It's a novel way to serve suet exclusively to these entertaining backyard birds.

HERE'S SOMETHING that will keep woodpeckers in your neighborhood happy. It's called an "acorn sandwich", and it's designed to give them sole rights to a high-protein suet treat.

Woodpeckers can easily feed from this sandwich by using their long tongues to reach the food deep between the boards. They'll have no problem hanging on to this feeder, either. It's made from rough cedar, giving them sure footing as they eat.

The best part is that other birds, such as pesky European starlings and grackles, can't devour the suet before woodpeckers get their share. That's because as the suet begins to disappear from around the edges of the feeder, it becomes too deep for these other birds to reach. Even squirrels will have a hard time with it.

We recommend buying suet from the butcher at your local grocery during the winter months when it's cooler. It's a treat woodpeckers can hardly resist. In warmer months, fill it with premade suet cakes available at most garden centers, grocery or hardware stores.

You may want to make your own "Acorn Sandwich Treat" (far right, inside the acorn pattern). The recipe was sent to us by Nancy Stone of Friendship, Wisconsin.

"We have many visitors of the woodpecker family come to our backyard thanks to this peanut butter suet," she writes. "During the winter when the snow is deep, we sit by a fire and watch downy, hairy, red-headed and even pileated woodpeckers eat their fill. It's a woodpecker winner!"

Make a Woodpecker Smile

1. Make a photocopy of the full-size acorn pattern at right, or simply trace it onto a sheet of paper. The acorn halves can be cut at the same time, but if you prefer cutting each board separately, make two patterns. With a scissors, cut out the paper patterns 1/2 inch beyond the guideline.

2. Cut two 9-inch-long boards from the cedar fence board. If you're cutting both acorn halves at once, place one board on top of the other (rough sides out) and nail them together at the corners with 1-1/4-inch finishing nails.

3. Trace the pattern onto the boards, or use a glue stick to temporarily attach it.

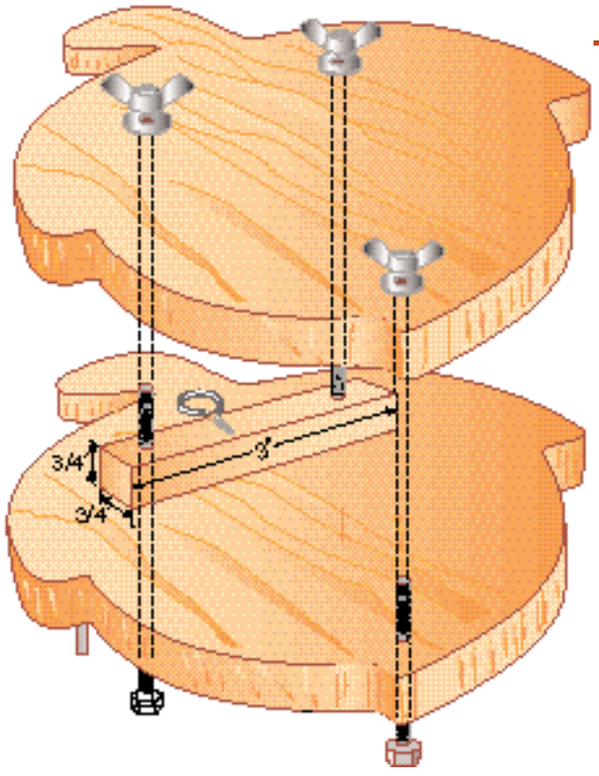
4. Cut out the acorn shape with a band, saber or scroll saw. If the paper pattern is attached to the boards, cut through it along the guideline. Remove the pattern and any excess glue when finished.

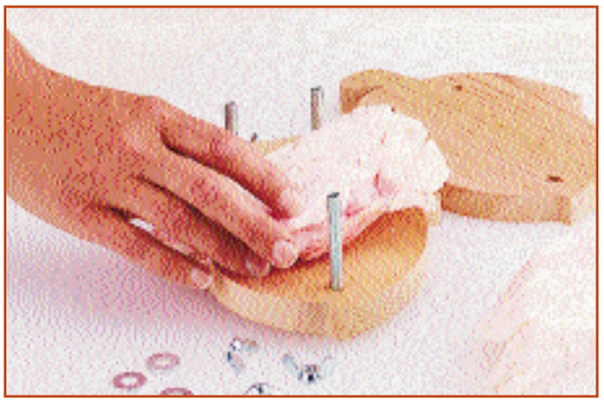
5. Cut a 3-inch 3/4-inch x 3/4-inch spacer to place between the two acorn-shaped boards near the top.

6. Drill three 5/16-inch holes through the acorn—two near the top and one at the bottom—for the bolts. The two top holes will be drilled through the acorn and the spacer as pictured in the plan at top right. When drilling the bottom hole, insert a 3/4-inch temporary spacer between the boards to keep them parallel when drilling.

7. Center a screw eye in the top of the spacer. This will be used to hang the feeder.

8. Insert the bolts through one acorn-shaped board and the spacer. Place fresh suet on top of the board and slide the second acorn onto the bolts and squeeze them together. Add a washer and wing nut to the end of each bolt, tighten and hang the feeder from the screw eye. Bon appetit, Woody!





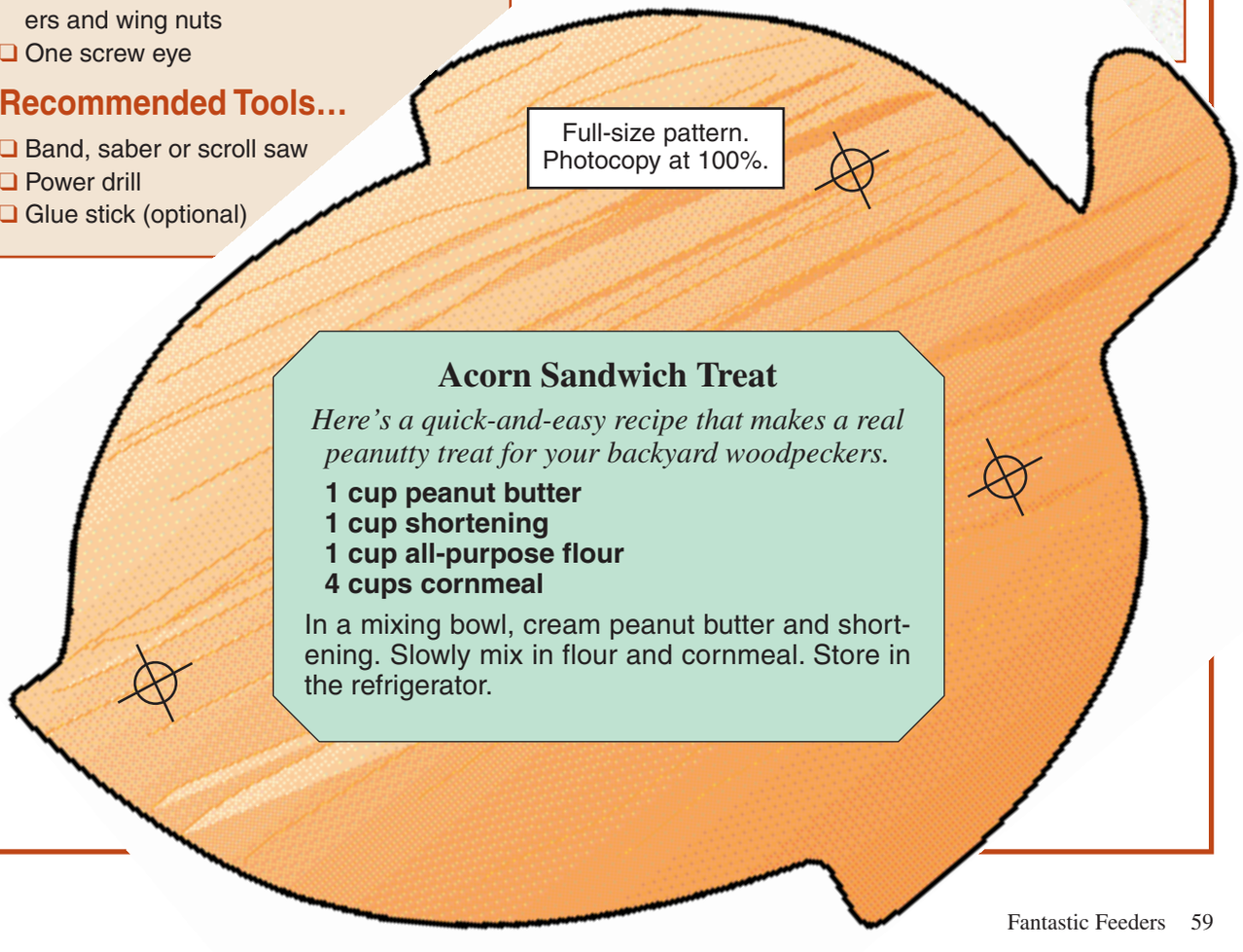
EASY as PB and J. The acorn sandwich is simple to fill. Just remove the wing nuts, take off one side and center the suet between the bolts. Place the side back onto the bolts, squeeze, tighten the nuts and serve a woodpecker lunch.

Here's What You'll Need...

- ❑ 18 inches of 6-inch-wide rough cedar fence board
- ❑ Three 1/4-inch x 3-inch bolts with washers and wing nuts
- ❑ One screw eye

Recommended Tools...

- ❑ Band, saber or scroll saw
- ❑ Power drill
- ❑ Glue stick (optional)



Full-size pattern. Photocopy at 100%.

Acorn Sandwich Treat

Here's a quick-and-easy recipe that makes a real peanutty treat for your backyard woodpeckers.

1 cup peanut butter
1 cup shortening
1 cup all-purpose flour
4 cups cornmeal

In a mixing bowl, cream peanut butter and shortening. Slowly mix in flour and cornmeal. Store in the refrigerator.